Skills Nova Scotia
Action Plan 2004–2005

NOVA SCOTIA

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Action Plan 2004–2005

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Message from the Premier

Office of the Premier

We, the Province of Nova Scotia, are working to create a world-class workforce ready to meet the demands of today and the promise of tomorrow. The *Skills Nova Scotia Action Plan 2004–2005* demonstrates the government's continued commitment to a prosperous Nova Scotia. This plan advances strategies that will help Nova Scotians compete in a global market place.

A primary focus this year is the development of strategies required to respond to the emerging skill demands of the labour market. For example, we are working with the construction, aerospace, and boat building sectors to develop strategies, initiatives, and activities that will address human resources planning and development priorities for these industries.

Another key focus is increasing the participation of groups who are under-represented in the labour force. The development of an immigration strategy and youth employment and skill development strategy are two important steps toward attracting and developing people with the range of skills required to contribute to the province's economic and social development well into the 21st century.

Nova Scotia is also continuing to implement a Health Human Resource Initiative which will speak to the development of Health Care providers in Nova Scotia. The Nursing Strategy, which supports practicing nurses and student nurses, enhances recruitment of LPNs and RNs, and increases workforce development and utilization, is a key component of this initiative.

We have laid the foundation with the Skills Nova Scotia Framework. We are building on our prior success and developing strategies to help us grow and diversify our economy.

With the help of our partners across government, business, labour, industry and education we continue to work together toward vision of a stronger workforce and a brighter future here in Nova Scotia

John Hamm

Premier of Nova Scotia
John F. Hamm

Message from the Minister of Education

Office of
the Minister
of Education

In 2002, the Premier named the Department of Education as the co-ordinating lead for the Skills Nova Scotia Framework. Since that time, we have been working with our partners to advance the goals identified as foundational for a prosperous and vibrant Nova Scotia.

The *2004–2005 Action Plan* highlights specific programs, services, and initiatives that government departments are advancing to position Nova Scotia as an attractive place to live, work, learn, and do business.

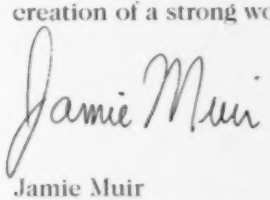
The cornerstone of our success lies with our continued collaboration with the wide range of stakeholders who make up the Nova Scotia labour market. Partnerships with industry, labour, employers, educational institutions, and other levels of government enable us to identify emerging skill demands and to develop strategies to provide Nova Scotians with opportunities to fill demands.

A review of the *2004–2005 Action Plan* demonstrates the importance of collaboration to the advancement of the skills agenda. The education and training of Medical Laboratory Technicians is a co-ordinated targeted initiative that responds to an emerging skill need. The Youth Apprenticeship Program works to improve opportunities for youth to develop the leadership skills required for successful labour market participation. The Energy Scholarship Program for students advances our objective to expand co-operative and work experience opportunities for students in Nova Scotia's secondary education system. Consultations based on *A Framework for Immigration: A Discussion Paper*, provide Nova Scotians with the opportunity to shape our efforts to attract and retain skilled workers. These initiatives, like many initiatives supported by government, depend upon the co-operation and investment of a range of stakeholders.

We are working more effectively together, but we need to continue our efforts if we are to realize our collective vision for Nova Scotia. A key component of this success will be the development of local labour market information (LMI) that can be used to direct policy and strategic investment in education and training.

This year, in an effort to create more reliable information, we are co-ordinating our LMI efforts with industry, business, labour, employers and the federal government to identify standardized data collection methodologies and practices. Our continuing work towards developing better access to career development services will serve to deliver accessible, accurate, and timely LMI to support Nova Scotians in making career choices.

The investment in Nova Scotians through initiatives that expand our economic and social horizons will pave the way into the future. We all have a role to play in the creation of a strong workforce and bright future.



Jamie Muir
Minister of Education

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Goals and Objectives

Goal 1: Meet the skill needs of Nova Scotia's labour market

Objectives

1. Research, develop, and distribute high-quality labour market information
2. Co-ordinate targeted initiatives that satisfy emerging skill needs
3. Work to enhance and improve the apprenticeship system in Nova Scotia
4. Improve mobility of skilled workers within Canada
5. Improve Nova Scotia's competitive edge in attracting and retaining highly skilled international workers
6. Design and implement labour policy to promote safe and healthy work environments, fair employment standards, and stable labour-management relations
7. Improve opportunities for youth to develop the leadership skills required for successful labour market participation

Goal 2: Provide better labour market access and supports to Nova Scotians

Objectives

1. Provide career- and employment-related services to Nova Scotians to help them develop their skills and find sustainable jobs
2. Assist low-income Nova Scotians, including income assistance recipients, to access education and training
3. Promote equity, fairness, and diversity throughout labour market programs and services offered in Nova Scotia
4. Develop and implement prior learning assessment and recognition processes and tools

Goal 3: Strengthen Nova Scotia's system of lifelong learning opportunities

Objectives

1. Increase the opportunities for Nova Scotia's children to develop a curiosity for learning and an ability to learn before entering Nova Scotia's education system
2. Improve the core skills of children in Nova Scotia's education system
3. Expand co-operative and work experience opportunities for students in Nova Scotia's secondary education system
4. Increase the opportunities for Nova Scotians to access adult basic education
5. Make education and training more relevant to the emerging skill needs of the learners and employers
6. Increase the post-secondary education and training system's capacity to respond to emerging labour market needs
7. Promote lifelong learning through the development of a learning culture

Introduction

The province created the Skills Nova Scotia Framework to co-ordinate strategic responses to meet Nova Scotia's labour market challenges, such as an aging workforce, rapid technological change, globalization, the out-migration of youth, and the imbalance between the supply and demand of skilled workers. The framework is a series of broad goals and objectives that the province strives to achieve in order to build a strong workforce and bright future for all Nova Scotians.

The *Skills Nova Scotia Action Plan 2004–2005* outlines a number of activities that the province is undertaking this fiscal year through the efforts of the following departments, offices, and agencies:

Aboriginal Affairs

Advisory Council on the Status of Women

Agriculture and Fisheries

Community Services

Education

Energy

Environment and Labour

Health

Office of Economic Development

Public Service Commission

Senior Citizens Secretariat

Tourism, Culture, and Heritage

Transportation and Public Works

Highlights in 2004–2005

The ability of governments, employers, education and training providers, communities, and Nova Scotians to contribute to the creation of a strong labour force hinge on our capacity to work together to identify labour market demands, engage the full range of our population in labour market activities, and provide the right balance of education and training to satisfy emerging demands with qualified workers.

Highlights of labour market activities to be undertaken in 2004–2005 include the following:

Access to High Quality Labour Market Information (LMI)

Access to timely, reliable labour market information is essential to effective decision making by individuals, employers, trainers and educators, and governments. Ensuring that high quality LMI is available and accessible to all those who have a role in the labour market is probably the single most important thing that we can do to enhance the economic well-being of Nova Scotians and to ensure that labour markets function well to support economic expansion and development of our economies. LMI also provides a foundation for government policy and program development initiatives.

The development of useful information requires strategic investment and co-ordination among employers, education and training providers, communities, and governments. In 2004–2005, a number of initiatives are contributing to the development of better labour market information. They include work that will identify methodologies for the analysis of existing and potential future occupational and skill imbalances (composed of shortages and surpluses) and the development of a LMI Portal to facilitate access to web-based resources in Nova Scotia.

Improved Labour Market Access and Supports

A well-balanced labour force enriches the labour market and the economy. Policies and practices that support all Nova Scotians in their efforts to enter the labour force requires partnerships among employers, education and training providers, and governments. In 2004–2005, a number of initiatives including One Journey—Work and Learn will support many Nova Scotians in their efforts to secure the education and training they need to gain meaningful employment. In addition, the province will analyze strategies related to the development of labour market strategies for youth and the aboriginal communities.

Creation of a Comprehensive Career Development Service for Nova Scotia

We have identified access to career development information and guidance as a long-term objective. In a well-functioning labour market, workers, students, and the unemployed are able to access career development, education, and employment counselling to help them plot meaningful career paths that lead to gainful employment and self-fulfilment. Work toward the development of career development services that was undertaken in 2003–2004 will be continued into 2004–2005. This includes completing a provincial inventory project to identify existing career development service providers and expanding Career Options materials that provide Nova Scotians with reliable career information.

Increased Capacity to Provide Labour Market Supports to Immigrants

The attraction and retention of immigrants has been identified as the key component to the future growth of our labour force. The aging workforce and declining rate of natural population increase will cause our labour force to shrink if immigration and other strategies such as repatriation are not used to attract immigrants and Canadians to come to Nova Scotia to live and work. This includes support for labour market attachment initiatives for immigrants such as New Beginnings, the Provincial Nominee Program, and consultations regarding the development of an immigration strategy for Nova Scotia.

Working Together

Our capacity to work together with the federal government is key to the contribution we make towards a strong labour force. The partnerships between the province and the federal government are instrumental in achieving common skills and learning goals. We continue to work through the Canada–Nova Scotia Skills and Learning Framework (CNSSLF), Canada–Nova Scotia Innovations Team (CNSSIT), and the Forum of Labour Market Ministers (FLMM) to improve Nova Scotia's labour force. There are also a number of agreements such as the Labour Market Development Agreement, Skill Development Agreement, Employment Assistance for Persons with Disabilities, and Early Childhood Development that support common skill development priorities of the federal and provincial governments. A number of the activities contained within the action plan support our common skills and learning goals.

2004–2005 Action Plan

Goal 1: Meet the skill needs of Nova Scotia's Labour Market

The capacity to respond to emerging skill needs will be the key component to Nova Scotia's competitiveness. The more adaptive, responsive, and flexible that our labour force and skills development practices become, the more competitive Nova Scotia's labour market will be.

Objective 1: Research, develop, and distribute high quality labour market information

Highlights of Activities Underway

- preparing a report on the findings of a survey of substitute teachers and recent Bachelor of Education graduates in response to projected shortages in the supply of teachers
- developing the Pathways teacher resources which will be used to illustrate to students possible pathways that lead to a range of occupations
- disseminating *Workplaces that Work: Creating a Workplace Culture that Attracts, Retains and Promotes Women*, a research paper and brochure commissioned by the federal, provincial, and territorial Status of Women Ministers
- participating on the Labour Market Information Committee under the Canada–Nova Scotia Skills and Learning Framework
- investigating and assessing methodologies for the analysis of existing and potential future occupational and skill imbalances (shortages and surpluses)
- working with the Greater Halifax Partnerships to design and implement the Smart Business retention and expansion project and to assess best practices for engaging employers to address human resource issues
- participating in national Canadian Occupational Projection System partnership activities to develop better provincial occupational projection models
- participating on the Data Steering Committee of the Forum of Labour Market Ministers (FLMM) Labour Market Information Working Group to undertake a feasibility study of options to address identified gaps in labour market data and to prepare an implementation plan for consideration by the FLMM

- participating in the Skills and Labour Market Information Committee of the Construction Trades Skills Development Initiative (CTSDI) and the Council of Atlantic Premiers (CAP) in order to support the National Construction Sector Council LMI project and to consider options for implementation in Nova Scotia
- working with Human Resources Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) and other partners to develop industry and occupational employment projections for Nova Scotia and to enhance capabilities for the identification and assessment of occupational imbalances (surpluses and shortages) such as the HRSDC High-Opportunity and Low-Opportunity Occupations lists

  Specific activities include

  - implementing more effective mechanisms for monitoring macroeconomic and industry trends
  - developing new informational products to complement existing labour market, industry, and occupational outlooks, including a document focussing on high-opportunity and low-opportunity occupations and profiles of select industry and occupational groupings
- working with partners such as the Federal-Provincial LMI Committee, non government organizations, and other provincial partners to co-ordinate research and planning activities
- developing a career-planning guide for out-of-school adults to complement the Career Options Occupational Handbook
- developing and publishing a guide of the sources of Labour Market Information (LMI) for use by career practitioners and their clients
- developing a French language version of the Career Options website and publication
- working with partners to develop and implement an LMI Portal to facilitate access to web-based resources in Nova Scotia
- participating in the steering committee for the Human Resources Skills Development Canada study that created 30 occupational profiles for health professions in Nova Scotia
- updating and releasing the 2004 *Nova Scotia Business Climate Index*, a key measure that compares Nova Scotia's business climate to other Canadian jurisdictions
- establishing a working group to review recent research findings on topics such as native women's arts and crafts and business skills and exploring how best to move forward and support recommendations

New Actions

- conduct research that will project the annual teacher supply and demand requirements until 2012–2013
- release the Nova Scotia Petroleum Skills Forum final report
- participate in a national natural resources sector skills forum to be held in Calgary in November 2004
- develop a website and search interface for online access to Pathways database and develop Pathways brochures for students and parents, mapping posters for classrooms, and teacher resources which will be used to illustrate possible pathways for students to follow from grade 7 through high school, post-secondary education and training, and to employment
- publish a research paper on barriers and opportunities for women in the trades
- publish *Women's Paid and Unpaid Work*, Part 5 of the Nova Scotia Advisory Council's statistical series
- work with the Greater Halifax Partnerships and the Halifax Regional Development Authority to investigate best practices approaches to conducting skills inventories and to identify means by which these can be developed as effective labour market information resources
- participate on the editorial committee of the NovaKnowledge *2004 Knowledge Economy Report Card*, which will focus on venture capital and immigration
- develop and implement a survey to collect labour market intelligence from groups such as sector councils, industry associations, and regional development agencies
- facilitate development of post-secondary graduate follow-up information to provide a better understanding of the labour market experiences of recent graduates
- work with partners to develop research standards, guidelines, and protocol for partners, such as sector councils and industry associations, to follow when undertaking LMI research
- work with partners to develop research standards and guidelines to assist in the evaluation of projects and proposals
- develop a labour market guide for recently arrived immigrants to complement *Career Options: An Occupational Handbook for Nova Scotians* and *Career Options: Teacher's Resource*
- produce and distribute a revised *Career Options: An Occupational Handbook for Nova Scotians* and *Career Options: Teacher's Resource*
- participate in the Atlantic Advisory Council on Health Human Resources Atlantic regional study that is examining the demand for practitioners in specific health occupations and the planning for education and training required to accommodate future HR shortages

Objective 2: Co-ordinate targeted initiatives that satisfy emerging skill needs

Highlights of Activities Underway

- developing a memorandum of understanding between government and universities which will include the identification and support of programs that meet the skill needs of Nova Scotia
- encouraging and supporting the Nova Scotia Community College in providing training programs that are designed to meet the specific needs of the various industry sectors and that are informed through a partnership involving government, business, and labour
- continuing to support Workforce Adjustment initiatives to provide career counselling, employment support, and essential skills training to displaced workers such as former fish plant workers in Canso
- partnering with the Aerospace and Defence Industries Association of Nova Scotia to implement its mandate to provide a sector-wide human resource strategy to address workforce attraction, retention, and skill development issues
- supporting the implementation of the Maritime Forces Atlantic Civilian Workforce Renewal Strategy which includes a summer employment program for under-represented groups
- continuing to support older workers, in partnership with the federal government, through the Older Worker Pilot Project, which is designed to reintegrate displaced older workers into sustainable employment or maintain employment of older workers threatened with displacement
- working with stakeholders to plan a co-ordinated strategy for recruitment and retention of women in trades and technology occupations
- working with Nova Scotia Community College and the boat building industry to establish a training program for a new generation of boat builders to respond to the dramatic renewal and transformation of Nova Scotia's boat building industry
- investing in skill development workshops and other professional development opportunities in various artistic disciplines and cultural activities
- providing ongoing administrative support to Nova Scotia Talent Trust which provides financial assistance to Nova Scotians who demonstrate potential and commitment to become recognized artists in their chosen fields
- investing in export marketing skills development initiatives
- offering skill development and enhancement courses through the Nova Scotia Centre for Craft and Design

- providing investment through the Anchor Organizations Program to cultural organizations that actively help to develop Nova Scotia's cultural sector and offer training or support services to individuals in the cultural sector
- providing investment to the Tourism Human Resource Council to facilitate activities that will enhance the tourism industry's ability to develop a strong workforce and promote participation in programs such as National Certification, Career Awareness, and Service Excellence
- assisting and developing training programs for provincial and regional Visitor Information Centre staff
- providing investment and facilitating training for Nova Scotia's tourism industry operators through the Best Business Practices Mission
- providing investment for tourism business organizations, for skill development workshops, and other professional development opportunities to enhance their market-readiness
- continuing to implement the Nova Scotia Nursing Strategy by:
  - supporting practicing nurses—utilizing the Telehealth Network, orientation programs, continuing education courses, and the RN Professional Development Program
  - supporting student nurses—providing the co-operative education program for third year Bachelor of Nursing students who have ten weeks of paid employment between June and August
  - enhancing recruitment—supplying relocation allowances, re-entry programs for LPNs and RNs, a provincial recruitment website, and increasing the number of nurse training seats
  - supporting workforce deployment and utilization—awarding nursing grants, conducting leadership conferences, and providing a practice environment collaborative program
- training 25 Medical Laboratory Technologists through a joint customized program between Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC) and New Brunswick Community College (NBCC) which ensures that each lab technician will work in Nova Scotia for two years following graduation in exchange for an $8000 bursary
- continuing to work with the construction industry through the Construction Trades Skills Development Initiative (CTSDI) to determine a course of action related to the National Construction Sector Council LMI work and the outcomes of the Atlantic Construction Symposium Report
- continuing to support the work of the Trucking Industry Working Group by focussing on three broad areas: professionalization, attraction and retention, and education and training

New Actions

- implement a comprehensive Brand Nova Scotia strategy that includes targeting ex-patriate Nova Scotians to return to Nova Scotia to live, work, invest, and do business
- implement a Sector Council Liaison Program to improve communication with industry sector councils and to identify areas for collaboration and partnership around common labour market development goals
- develop a training partnership for the residential construction industry
- initiate recruitment of 24 additional Medical Laboratory Technologist students for a second program at NBCC that will be held from March 2005 to February 2007
- discuss options for establishing a Medical Laboratory Technologist training program in Nova Scotia

Objective 3: Work to enhance and improve the apprenticeship system in Nova Scotia

Highlights of Activities Underway

- continuing to provide and grow online apprenticeship programming through the Nova Scotia Community College
- expanding the Apprenticeship Essential Skills Initiative to provide essential skills and assessment for each new apprentice and trade qualifier
- reviewing and refreshing apprenticeship training standards in collaboration with the other Atlantic provinces
- optimizing the annual technical training capacity for active apprentices
- partnering with education, business, labour, and sector councils to establish a Youth Apprenticeship Program
- undertaking a review of Apprenticeship trade regulations
- developing opportunities for upgrading and enhancement training for trade practitioners
- facilitating joint marketing initiatives with Skills Canada-Nova Scotia to promote careers in the skilled trades and technologies
- publishing results of the provincial Youth Decision Survey related to occupations in the skilled trades, and technologies
- developing a comprehensive marketing strategy for the Apprenticeship Training and Skill Development division and the Apprenticeship Board
- participating on the Apprenticeship, Learning, and Earning Committee under the Canada–Nova Scotia Skills and Learning Framework

New Actions

- develop models for mentor and coach training for journeypersons
- investigate the establishment of a Blue Seal (post-journey) business skills program
- review the Apprenticeship program delivery model
- review the virtual campus delivery option for Apprenticeship courses and identify potential areas for growth

Objective 4: Improve mobility of skilled workers within Canada

Highlights of Activities Underway

- continuing to ensure that programs at Nova Scotia Community College meet national certification standards, thus allowing its graduates the opportunity to seek employment anywhere in Canada
- enhancing the National Interprovincial Standards Red Seal Program for the trades in partnership with business, industry, and labour
- creating Atlantic Apprenticeship Training Standards to increase labour mobility for apprentices and trades practitioners
- implementing the labour mobility chapter of the obligations in the *Agreement on Internal Trade* to reduce or remove barriers to the movement of workers within Canada and therefore making it easier for skilled workers to choose where they live and work
- creating and implementing a strategic work plan for a new policy on provincial labour mobility awareness and compliance that includes the promotion and marketing of the policy

New Action

- negotiate a marine worker mobility program under the auspices of the Atlantic Energy Roundtable

Objective 5: Improve Nova Scotia's competitive edge in attracting and retaining highly-skilled international workers

Highlights of Activities Underway

- implementing the Provincial Nominee Program to encourage immigrants to settle in Nova Scotia
- continuing to support the English in the Workplace Program that provides customized language training to employed immigrants

- supporting the occupational specific language training, in partnership with the Halifax Immigrant Learning Centre and Metropolitan Immigrant Settlement Association
- continuing to support English as a Second Language (ESL) training programs, including English for Academic Purposes, English in the Workplace, and ESL one-on-one tutoring programs
- partnering with ESL service providers to address needs in the immigrant community through the ESL Co-ordinating Committee
- continuing the collaborative project with the Fujian Agriculture and Forestry University in China that will bring a contingent of 40–50 students to the Nova Scotia Agricultural College in September 2005
- pursuing international opportunities to promote immigration and new investment such as owner/operator producers that will assist in sustaining and further developing our agricultural industry
- continuing policy development and approval process for the Multiculturalism Policy by working with an interdepartmental forum and external stakeholders
- encouraging regulatory bodies to recognize workers who have obtained their qualifications in other countries
- implementing the Foreign Credential Assessment and Recognition (FCAR) project to help immigrants fill gaps in the labour market by working in their chosen fields

New Actions

- release *A Framework for Immigration: A Discussion Paper* which is available at <www.gov.ns.ca/immigration>
- undertake a consultative process, with selected stakeholders and public input, on the options to consider and the resources required to implement the provincial immigration strategy
- allow international students who graduate from Nova Scotia colleges and universities to have their work permits renewed for a second year to continue working in the province in employment related to their field of study
- fund a professional development workshop for ESL practitioners
- partner with Metropolitan Immigrant Settlement Association on phase two of Enhanced Language Training Project: Nova Scotia Language Pathways
- develop an investment prospectus and business case information that will be used to profile Nova Scotia as an attractive site for new farm operators
- participate in an agriculture trade show in the Netherlands in January 2005

- work with Atlantic regional governments and health partners regarding the feasibility of jointly developing an Internationally Educated Health Professionals Appraisal Centre that would help to increase the number of health care practitioners, especially in rural communities. The centre could assess the credentials and skills of family physicians in year one, add specialists in year two, and add other health professions in year three of operation

Objective 6: Design and implement labour policies to promote safe and healthy work environments, fair employment standards, and stable labour–management relations

Highlights of Activities Underway

- conducting ongoing reviews of Occupational Health and Safety legislation to meet provisions of proposed sunset clause, red tape reduction, government's legislative agenda, and ongoing program evaluation and review
- participating in the creation of workplace safety and insurance system performance targets and the development of a system-wide appeals management process in consultation with stakeholders
- conducting research on family life, earning a livelihood, and the relationship between women's health and well-being through the Healthy Balance Research Program in partnership with the Atlantic Centre of Excellence for Women's Health

New Actions

- establish a minimum wage advisory committee in accordance with the fall 2003 Labour Standards Code amendments
- undertake a review of the Labour Standards Code hours of work averaging provisions as they relate to the Nova Scotia construction and road building industries
- provide training for municipal fire inspectors as required to support implementation of the Fire Safety Act
- convene a tripartite labour relations roundtable, with representatives from the private sector, public sector, and organized labour, to discuss ways to improve collective bargaining and to ensure Nova Scotia's labour climate supports a growing economy
- publish qualitative research findings and conduct a survey of Nova Scotians' unpaid caregiving through the Healthy Balance Research Program, in partnership with the Atlantic Centre of Excellence for Women's Health
- publish a paper on policy options to support dependent care through the Healthy Balance Research Program, in partnership with the Atlantic Centre of Excellence for Women's Health

Objective 7: Improve opportunities for youth to develop the leadership skills required for successful labour market participation

Highlights of Activities Underway

- continuing partnership with the HeartWood Centre of Community Youth Development as a means of enabling more young Nova Scotians to gain the leadership skills required for labour market and community participation
- assisting students at Nova Scotia Community College with the transition from high school to college through the Learner Pathways initiative which informs students on high school course selection and provides articulation agreements and curriculum co-ordination between high schools and the college
- building and defining the Youth Apprenticeship Strategy and the partnerships that support it
- promoting high school leadership courses such as Leadership Development 12
- continuing to offer skills development opportunities to youth in care, dependents, and direct recipients of income assistance through the Youth Development Initiative
- providing investment to youth organizations involved in skill development such as the Halifax Dance Young Company and Nova Scotia Youth Orchestra
- advancing Open for Business, a province-wide Youth Initiative that introduces entrepreneurship and business skills to youth
- continuing to advance the Junior Achievement Youth Initiative across the province and developing a proposal to introduce the initiative in Mainland First Nation Schools
- piloting two youth apprenticeship initiatives

New Actions

- develop a Youth Employment and Skills Development Strategy to provide direction for provincial government in assisting young Nova Scotians to make a meaningful connection to the labour market
- develop a business plan to establish YouthBuild in Nova Scotia as a means of helping out-of-school youth to build the academic, employability, and workplace skills necessary to return to education and training or to pursue employment in the skilled trades
- recognize leadership credentials such as Duke of Edinburgh Awards for credit toward graduation

Goal 2: Provide better labour market access and supports to Nova Scotians

Objective 1: Provide career- and employment-related services to Nova Scotians to help them develop their skills and find sustainable jobs

Highlights of Activities Underway

- creating employment opportunities for aboriginal students, racially visible students, students with disabilities, and female students pursuing studies in non-traditional areas through a Summer Emplotment Diversity Initiative and a summer Female Mentorship Program
- improving policies and practices that help manage, recognize, and reward performance of public servants who contributed to government's goals and priorities
- hosting the annual Job Fair at Nova Scotia Agricultural College with emphasis on emerging job opportunities in agriculture, environmental science and management, and land and natural resource management
- offering career and job development services to eligible income assistance recipients for participation in employability enhancing activities
- promoting the Employment Development Program, a work-based training program designed to provide workplace learning opportunities and foundations for long-term employment
- supporting the work of the Provincial Nursing Network, Rural and Remote Working Group, which examines nursing recruitment and retention in Nova Scotia

New Actions

- implement the Canadian Agricultural Skill Service (CASS) federal-provincial program to help farmers and their spouses increase family income on or off the farm by providing them with assistance for skills development and access to training in areas such as business management, accounting, finance, human resource management, and training for other employment or for starting a new business
- implement a public education plan intended to improve Nova Scotian awareness of oil and gas occupations and career opportunities

- provide recent post-secondary graduates with an opportunity to work with the Province of Nova Scotia in the areas of finance, IT, human resources, policy, communications, or engineering and gain valuable experience for up to two years through a Post-Secondary Internship Program
- implement tools that support the succession management process as outlined in the Public Service Comission's *Guide to Succession Management*
- provide government employees opportunities to accelerate development and learning that is focussed on portable skills and leadership competencies through the Leadership Continuity Program and the Career Assignment Program

Objective 2: Assist low income Nova Scotians, including income assistance recipients, to access education and training

Highlights of Activities Underway

- administering the Nova Scotia Student Loan Program and the Canada Student Loan Program to serve approximately 18,000 Nova Scotian post-secondary students per year
- continuing to provide the Debt Reduction Program as part of the Nova Scotia Student Loan Program, which reduces debt levels for those students who successfully complete their program of study, and provides further debt reduction for those students who then work in Nova Scotia and/or repay their student loan in a responsible fashion
- offering the Educate to Work Program to provide opportunities for income assistance recipients to attend Nova Scotia Community College and Université Sainte-Anne
- providing opportunities for income assistance recipients to access tuition-free programs through the Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning

Objective 3: Promote equity, fairness, and diversity throughout labour market programs and services offered in Nova Scotia

Highlights of Activities Underway

- continuing recruitment initiatives targeted at students with disabilities to promote enrollment in post-secondary education programs at Nova Scotia Community College and at universities across the province
- developing an approach to integrate Individual Program Plan students from the public education system into appropriate post-secondary training programs at Nova Scotia Community College
- developing and promoting campus-based services for students with disabilities delivered with a common provincial standard

- supporting post-secondary institutions in the enhancement of services for students with disabilities
- supporting a special admission process and a certificate of accomplishment for students with disabilities who require program modifications at the Nova Scotia Community College
- recruiting and referring qualified designated group applicants for employment competitions
- providing individual employment counselling to designated group applicants and government employees
- making presentations and conducting workshops on employment opportunities and job search techniques to community organizations
- conducting workshops and seminars for managers in the civil service to create awareness of diversity management, the nature of the affirmative action policy, and their role in the implementation
- reviewing employment policies and practices to ensure that barriers to employment or advancement of persons from designated groups are eliminated
- ensuring that fair hiring practices are followed when filling positions within the Province of Nova Scotia through implementation of the Fair Hiring Policy
- providing a workplace that is free of discrimination and promotes equality of opportunity to all persons accessing employment positions within the Province of Nova Scotia through implementation of an affirmative action policy
- continuing to ensure the right of provincial employees to work in an environment free of sexual harassment and any harassment based on the protected characteristics set out in the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act through the Sexual Harassment and No Discrimination Policy
- prohibiting discrimination against provincial employees, clients, or job applicants living with or affected by HIV or AIDS through implementation of the HIV/AIDS in the Workplace Policy
- ensuring reasonable steps are taken to provide services to persons who are deaf and hard-of-hearing in a fair and non-discriminatory manner through the provision of interpreter services through implementing the Government Sign Language Interpreter Services Policy
- providing targeted funding to support adult literacy and essential skills for the Acadian, African-Canadian, Mi'kmaq, and Deaf communities
- supporting groups such as Techsploration, Hypatia, and the Women for Economic Equality Society to promote women's access to education, training, and labour market activity

- promoting collaboration and information sharing between governmental and non-governmental stakeholders on issues affecting women in the labour market through the Nova Scotia Advisory Council Round Table on Women's Economic Security
- continuing to support the Black Business Initiative's business skills training activities, including the Business is Jammin' Program, to encourage youth entrepreneurship
- delivering Mi'kmaq Quest, an entrepreneurship skills training program for Aboriginal youth
- establishing a committee and beginning the planning for a second Aboriginal Youth Business Summit for Spring 2005

New Actions

- establish collaborations between aboriginal organizations and provincial and federal governments to develop a co-ordinated and effective approach to an Aboriginal Labour Market Strategy, which is a key priority identified within the Mi'Kmaq-Nova Scotia-Canada Tripartite Forum
- begin to identify strategies to streamline the process of transitioning students with disabilities from supports offered through the public education system to supports available at post-secondary institutions across the province
- upgrade campus-based assistive technology workstations at post-secondary institutions across the province
- develop a youth apprenticeship initiative for African Nova Scotian youth
- deliver summer employment programs for under-represented groups
- conduct consultations with under-represented groups as part of community-based literacy program review process
- publish and disseminate *Building Transitions to Good Jobs for Low Income Women*, a research report on access issues and best practice in transition to employment programs for low income women in Nova Scotia

Objective 4: Develop and implement prior learning assessment and recognition processes and tools

Highlights of Activities Underway

- developing a memorandum of understanding between government and the universities that will address, among other things, the transferability of credits
- providing the option of earning up to two-thirds of a program at Nova Scotia Community College through prior learning assessment and recognition (PLAR) and making course descriptions and learning outcomes readily available for students who are exploring this option
- supporting the development and implementation of PLAR policy and procedures that will provide an additional pathway to acquire the Continuing Care Assistant designation which will become compulsory in November 2004
- providing advisory services and funding to the Nova Scotia Health Care Human Resource Council to aid in the development and delivery of a prior learning assessment and recognition process for Continuing Care Assistants Program
- providing support to training suppliers in implementing PLAR procedures and in delivering continuing education models for training health care providers
- researching with other jurisdictions joint projects for essential skills and transferable skills assessment for apprenticeable trades
- developing a strategy to increase under-represented groups within Apprenticeship Training and Skill Development staff and client base
- facilitating diversity awareness in Apprenticeship Training and Skill Development educational programming
- supporting the implementation of the Challenge for Credit process in public schools
- collaborating with various industry groups to provide research and information on the practices and promotion of PLAR
- chairing a multi-stakeholder committee to develop a sustainable mechanism for the delivery of PLAR services
- continuing the review process for the recognition of additional post-secondary credits as elective credits towards the Nova Scotia High School Graduation Diploma for Adults

- working with the Prior Learning Assessment Centre to provide career and life portfolio programming to recipients of income assistance
- working on the development of a workbook to assist Department of Community Services career practitioners with a model based on PLAR that would assist them in evidencing competencies in relation to the National Standards Guidelines for Career Practitioners

New Actions

- explore recognition of Department of National Defence training programs towards credits for Nova Scotia High School Graduation Diploma for Adults
- develop training programs for service providers to increase Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning's capacity regarding PLAR
- pilot a prior learning assessment (PLA) project at the PLA Symposium in November 2004 in collaboration with the province of New Brunswick
- deliver PLAR training to Department of Community Services staff through the Career Theory Program and the Career Practitioner Certificate Program which will result in staff being trained to evidence competencies of their clients

Goal 3: Strengthen Nova Scotia's system of lifelong learning opportunities

Objective 1: Increase the opportunities for Nova Scotia's children to develop a curiosity for learning, and an ability to learn, prior to entering Nova Scotia's education system

Highlights of Activities Underway

- continuing to participate in Read to Me! and providing story times for infants, toddlers, and pre-school children at all public libraries in the province
- continuing co-ordination of the Family Learning Initiative Endowment Fund (FLIEF), which funds projects to support parent/child literacy through a partnership between Halifax Youth Foundation, National Literacy Secretariat (HRSDC), and the Department of Education
- chairing the Family Literacy Advisory Group for Nova Scotia to develop an action plan for family literacy in the province through a National Literacy Secretariat funded project
- encouraging learning in archaeology, biology, culture, geology, heritage, and palaeontology through delivery of a comprehensive program of curriculum-linked school classes through the Nova Scotia Museum
- supporting curriculum-based education through the delivery of the School Kits Program, where education kits of museum artifacts, specimens, and teaching materials are loaned to teachers, schools, and other educational groups

New Actions

- engage with cross-departmental partners to develop the new Ready to Learn voluntary, free pre-school program for four-year-olds which will be piloted in 20 sites in September 2005
- partner with the National Adult Literacy Database (NALD) and Literacy Nova Scotia to create a family literacy database
- participate in and support the Francophone Family Literacy Committee to establish an action plan for the Acadian community through a four-year National Literacy Secretariat contribution

Objective 2: Improve the core skills of children in Nova Scotia's education system

Highlights of Activities Underway

- supporting the implementation of Active Young Readers primary to grade 6, Writers in Action 5 and 6, and Active Readers 7 and 8
- providing targeted funding for site-based mathematics professional development for teachers primary to grade 9
- training literacy and math mentors across the province
- supporting implementation of new Math Plus grade 10 course options that offer increased time and support for mathematics learning
- investing in programs delivered by professional artists in schools including programs such as Arts Smarts, Professional Artists in the Schools (PAINTS), and Writers in the Schools (WITS)

New Actions

- implement the Literacy Success initiatives Writers in Action 6, Active Readers 9, and Writers in Action 10, and provide learning resources for students and professional development and resources for teachers
- provide targeted funding for increased support to grade 7 students struggling with literacy
- implement new curriculum for grade 3 science and provide professional development for teachers and new resources for schools to support the implementation
- provide new mathematics textbooks for grade 3 students, teaching resources for grades primary to 6, and information and materials for parents to support their children's mathematics learning in the early years
- implement new minimum classroom time requirements for language arts and mathematics grades 7 and 8
- expand the Math Essentials pilot, implement Calculus 12, and provide professional development for grades 10, 11, and 12 math leaders in every school

Objective 3: Expand co-operative and work experience opportunities for students in Nova Scotia's secondary education system

Highlights of Activities Underway

- promoting community-based education initiatives in school boards across the province
- including work experience components in new career-related courses at the high school level
- providing work experiences which focus on broad topics such as cultural history, science, and marine history through work placements of high school students in museums and in provincial Visitor Information Centres
- providing significant opportunities under the Community Access Program (C@P) for students to access entry-level work placement opportunities throughout Nova Scotia
- continuing student placements under the Co-operative Employment Program in partnership with universities and with Nova Scotia Community College
- continuing to offer a bursary at Dalhousie University Faculty of Engineering and one at the Nova Scotia Community College, through the Transportation and Public Works Planning for Progress: Employment Bursary Program
- providing meaningful and applicable employment opportunities with the Province of Nova Scotia to post-secondary co-op students through the Co-operative Employment Program
- designing an Energy scholarship program for secondary students considering careers in the energy sector
- resuming work on community-based education support document for schools

Objective 4: Increase the opportunities for Nova Scotians to access adult basic education

Highlights of Activities Underway

- supporting and enhancing the Adult Learning Program at the Nova Scotia Community College through the newly created School of Access
- administering and co-ordinating programs for adults seeking to improve their literacy and essential skills, and/or obtain the Nova Scotia High School Graduation Diploma for Adults through partnerships under the Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning (NSSAL)
- supporting community-based literacy organizations to provide Adult Learning Program Levels I, II, and III
- undertaking a review of community-based adult literacy programs in Nova Scotia to develop a program delivery model that is effective, efficient, inclusive, and sustainable in the decade ahead

- continuing to work closely with Nova Scotia Community College, Université Sainte-Anne, school boards, community-based learning organizations, and Human Resource and Skills Development Canada to ensure that adult learners are appropriately served, referred, and counseled
- continuing to research alternative delivery modes for the Adult Learning Program
- working in partnership with Nova Scotia Community College to develop online courses for adult learners
- distributing seniors' literacy resource kits to literacy co-ordinators around the province and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for seniors in the *Programs for Seniors* directory
- partnering with concerned others to address the lifelong learning needs of seniors in an urban, underdeveloped section of central Halifax
- enhancing the literacy skills of Nova Scotia seniors using the seniors' literacy resource kit
- working with the Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning on referring individuals that require academic upgrading as part of essential skills development

New Actions

- partner with Literacy Nova Scotia on a project entitled Development and Implementation of Learning Technology in Community-Based Literacy Programming, which has as a main focus providing technology and program access for adult learners
- deliver upgrading programs to seniors in five regions of Nova Scotia in 2004–05
- develop a proposal to initiate and deliver health literacy programs for seniors

Objective 5: Make education and training more relevant to the emerging skill needs of the learners and employers

Highlights of Activities Underway

- continuing to support Techsploration, a school-based career exploration initiative for grade 9 girls that provides exposure to non-traditional occupations in trades and technology
- implementing the Youth Pathways and Transitions strategy including the introduction of the new career-related courses Agriculture/Agrifood 11, Business Management 12, and Food Science 12
- continuing to develop new career-related and interactive technologies courses such as Health and Human Services 12

- developing curriculum for new programs such as Water Resources Management, which will be delivered as a Masters Degree at Nova Scotia Agricultural College and has a target implementation date of September 2007
- regulating private career colleges under the Private Career Colleges Regulation Act, which offers standards by which to approve programs and register instructors
- review program offerings through Program Advisory Committees involving business, government, and labour, to ensure that the relevance and quality of programs at Nova Scotia Community College is maintained
- supporting the skill development of the current workforce through the award-winning Workplace Education Initiative to assist employees with managing change brought on by a rapidly changing workplace
- conducting organizational needs assessments for business and industry to identify workforce training needs and options for addressing those needs
- helping displaced workers find new employment through the Workforce Skill Development Initiative that supports targeted initiatives and essential skills enhancement
- providing professional development and certification opportunities for workplace education instructors to customize essential skills programs to meet the needs of business, industry, and labour
- supporting a sector liaison program to facilitate sharing of labour market information and to develop customized responses to labour market challenges
- implementing a revision plan for the English Adult Learning Program and French Formation générale des adultes curriculum for the Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning
- continuing to pilot new Adult Learning Program curriculum in the areas of mathematics, communications, science, and social studies
- continuing to include five cross-cutting themes into Adult Learning Program curriculum which explicitly includes employability into the learning outcomes
- providing adult basic education instructors with training related to the new curriculum and its important links to employability
- working on the One Journey—Work and Learn project, a labour market attachment project partnering with industry, which combines essential skills training and a specific industry skills training that leads to guaranteed employment upon successful completion

New Actions

- develop the new career-related and interactive technologies courses Geomatics 12, Computer Programming 12, and Tourism 12
- pilot the new course Multimedia 12
- develop and expand outreach programs designed to educate students with the range of skills used in jobs through efforts such as job fairs, departmental speakers bureaus, and open houses
- implement new initiatives to support the ongoing review of programs at Nova Scotia Community College
- create a partnership with the residential building sector to help them address their human resources and professionalization needs
- review and revise the Adult Learning Program's Career Skills Development Level IV curriculum to make it more relevant and applicable to the world of work
- create and implement a professional development strategy which will provide information and training to all adult education instructors regarding employability and essential skills training and their links to the emerging trends in the world of work
- develop and implement a strategy to promote the recommendations in *Building Transitions to Good Jobs for Low-Income Women* and collaborate with governmental and non-governmental stakeholders and the Nova Scotia Advisory Council Round Table on Women's Economic Security to follow up on the recommendations in the report

Objective 6: Increase the post-secondary education and training system's capacity to respond to emerging labour market needs

Highlights of Activities Underway

- increasing the capacity of Nova Scotia Community College by 2000 seats through renovations at existing campuses and the construction of a new metro campus
- working with Nova Scotia Community College's articulation committee to develop policies and procedures for the formal recognition of prior learning in core programs for adult learners
- supporting groups such as Hypatia and the Women for Economic Equality Society in their work of improving the culture of educational institutions and workplaces to attract and retain women in science and trades and technology occupations
- offering skill development, enhancement, and work experience opportunities to students attending private career colleges, community colleges, and universities through work term placements in Visitor Information Centres

- providing work experiences which focus on topics such as cultural history, practical business skills, marine history, science, and technology through work placements in museums
- encouraging the continuation of university-based development centres that expose students and the community to entrepreneurship development activities and techniques
- supporting graduate study programs by funding post-secondary and hospital research through the Nova Scotia Research and Innovation Trust Fund and the Nova Scotia Health Research Foundation

Objective 7: Promote lifelong learning through the development of a learning culture

Highlights of Activities Underway

- continuing to provide leadership and skills development for rural youth through the 4-H program which seeks to enhance knowledge of Nova Scotia's agricultural industry through hands-on experiences and also seeks to mentor youth in a range of life skills including public speaking, community activism and volunteerism, networking, and team building
- continuing to expand the Government @ Your Service program to all eligible public libraries and C@P sites across the province
- working with business and labour partners through Chambers of Commerce and NovaKnowledge to promote workplace learning as a primary strategy for addressing the skills requirements of our workforce
- implementing the Time to Learn strategy which emphasizes the importance of effective use of instructional time available in the school day
- administering elementary literacy assessment to grade 6 students and providing individual student results to parents
- participating in and supporting annual celebratory events, including International Family Literacy Day, Peter Gzowski Invitational (PGI) Golf Tournament, International Literacy Day, International Adult Learners' Week, and Word on the Street
- promoting educational resources and opportunities by increasing the accessibility of provincial and community heritage resources and genealogical information available online through the Nova Scotia Museum and Public Archives
- encouraging an interest in archaeology, biology, culture, geology, heritage, and palaeontology by providing a comprehensive schedule of interpretive programs and exhibits specific to Nova Scotia through the Nova Scotia Museum

New Actions

- provide executive training based on the parliamentary procedures "Roberts' Rules of Order" in the 4-H regions and organize an intermediate 4-H conference for 13- to 15-year-olds focussing on increasing leadership skills
- promote with employers the benefits of human resource development, employment equity, lifelong learning, and best practices
- implement anti-bullying initiatives such as the Positive and Effective Behavioural Support initiative, including *School Code of Conduct Guidelines, Meeting Behaviour Challenges: Creating Safe and Caring Learning Environments*
- provide information and materials for parents to support their children's literacy and mathematics learning in the early years
- launch an interactive website to provide parents with information on public school programs and services, and expectations for student learning and achievement at different grade levels
- implement a Lunch 'n' Learn program to field offices across the province

Conclusion

The *Skills Nova Scotia Action Plan 2004–2005* builds on the work of 2003–2004 to develop the skills, supports, and systems necessary to achieve a world-class workforce ready to meet the challenges of today and the promise of tomorrow. The province is moving toward the vision of tomorrow through the hard work, planning, and co-operation of today. With the development of strategies and initiatives involving youth employment and skill development, immigration, youth apprenticeship, medical laboratory technologists, nursing, and many others, Nova Scotia is developing a strong workforce and securing a bright future.